brother, known to history as Tai Tsung, to complete the unification of the Empire. This he only partially achieved. Wu Ytieh was annexed and the Northern Han eliminated. Attempts to oust the Khitan, however, failed. Some gains against them were registered, but reverses were also suffered. The two powers? the Sung .and the Khitan, seemed about evenly matched. Nan Chao was not subdued, and a revolt foi many years separated Annarn from China.

THE EXTERNAL POLITICS OF THE SUNG TO 1127

The successors of T'ai Tsu and T'ai Tsung fell even farther short of clearing the Empire of alien rulers than had the founders of the dynasty. None of the line appears to have shown marked political ability. Several were dissipated weaklings and ihe best were amiable mediocrities, interested in literature and art, but not providing the type of leadership needed by an empire confronted with vigorous enemies. Divided counsels at court gave rise to vacillation in foreign policy. Sometimes offering effective military resistance under able generals, sometimes buying peace at humiliating terms, at others seeking to play off one enemy against another, the Sung Emperors often presented a sorry spectacle. Step by step their territories were wrested from them and eventually they lost their throne to foreign invaders.

For years the Khitan plagued them, especially as decline began to overtake the Sung. In the Northwest, moreover, a new menace arose. In the later years of the T'ang, a Tangut people, speaking a Tibeto-Burman language, had established a state called Hsi Hsia. They reached the acme of their power in the eleventh century, and one of the most vigorous of their rulers

then assumed the title of Emperor. They were affected by Chinese culture, developing, among other things, a script which showed the influence of Chinese characters. Like the Khitan, they had no scruples against encroaching on the domains of the Sung, and their territories eventually included much of the Ordos country and of the present Kansu and some of the modern Shensi. Occasionally the Sung were aided against the Hsi Hsia by the Uighurs, still something of a power in the West, and at times, TOO, the Hsi Hsia and the Khitan were at war.

Although the fortunes of battle were not always against them,